Scrapping of subsidy on Fertilizers

1128. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the High powered Committee on Agriculture policies and programmes has submitted its interim report to Government ;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has recommended scrapping of subsidy on fertilizers ; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : (a) The High Powered Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh has not submitted interim report to Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Proposal for new railway lines for Orissa

1129. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) what were the proposals for new Railway lines submitted by the State Government of Orissa pending for consideration ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) the reaction of Government to the said proposal ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (c) A proposal was received from the Government of Orissa for a new railway line from Khurda Road to Balangir, passing through Phulbani District. Accordingly, a survey was carried out for Khurda Road–Balangir (289 km) new BG railway line in 1986. The project was then estimated to cost Rs. 209 crores with 1% return on investment. An alternative alignment via Phulbani was also surveyed by the same was found very costly and with steeper gradients and as such could not be considered.

The proposal was sent to the Planning Commission for consideration and approval for development of backward areas during VIII Five Year Plan. Planning Commission has directed that the project be referred to the Working Group on Railway's Programmes for the Eighth Five Year Plan. However, the sub-group for new lines had not identified any particular new line project for inclusion in the Eighth Plan document for consideration of the Working Group but had only included a lumpsum kilometrage for new starts. Taking up of Khurda Balangir project would, therefore, depend on availability of resources in the Eighth Plan, and the position this project will get in the overall national priorities.

Institutions for Physically Handicapped Persons in rural areas in the country

1130. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of institutes for physically handicapped persons catering to the needs to people in rural areas of the country ; and

(b) what steps Government are taking to increase the number of such institutes for rural people ?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Fifty one Voluntary organisations receiving grants-in-aid from the Ministry of Welfare are at present working in the rural areas of the country. Further, 11 District Rehabilitation Centres fully funded by the Ministry of Welfare are also working for the rehabilitation of the handicapped people in the rural areas. Besides, 4 National Institutes and two other Institutes, functioning under the control of the Ministry of Welfare are providing extension services in the rural areas by holding camps etc. A pilot project called National Job Development Centre has been set up recently at Bombay to Cater to vocational rehabilitation services of both the rural and urban disabled.

(b) During VIIIth Plan, the needs of all the disabled population in the rural areas who are now left uncovered, would be taken care of by providing grants to the voluntary organisations in the rural areas. The Institutes being fully funded by the Ministry of Welfare would also be required to provide more extension services in the rural areas,